

Kessler, Ellen

From: Custer Nilsson [custernilsson@ridge-runner.com]
Sent: Friday, July 24, 2009 4:50 PM
To: Strength, Stephanie - Washington, DC
Subject: Comments re: CAPX2020

The CAPX2020 transmission line designed to primarily serve communities surrounding Rochester, MN and La Crosse, WI should not be routed through rural areas in Trempealeau County, WI. In May of 2009 residents of Trempealeau County were informed that two new 'alternate' routes had been developed for the CAPX2020 transmission line. Both of the new routes traverse wide swaths of Trempealeau County. JUNE 2009 WAS THE FIRST TIME WE WERE INFORMED THAT NEW ROUTES WERE BEING CONSIDERED NEAR OUR HOMES.

I-200-001

Residents along all other routes had been informed over a year earlier and had been given the opportunity to impact initial decisions about proposed routes. This opportunity was denied to citizens along the new routes in Trempealeau County.

We are poor - *see per capita income below - we are few - *see population data below and we were not given equal opportunity to impact early decisions about these transmission routes. This process has put citizens of Trempealeau County at a distinct disadvantage.

I-200-002

At no time in all the years of planning leading up to this process did Dairyland Power or Riverland Energy inform rate payers that new transmission lines could be placed in the rural areas of Trempealeau County that are bisected by the new routes.

I-200-003

The transmission lines should be placed near those population centers that are creating the need - don't destroy our rural landscape. Taking the route through our heavily wooded and agricultural lands will destroy hundreds of trees at a time when an increase of carbon monoxide in our atmosphere threatens life on our planet. Rural wooded lands such as ours should be preserved, not destroyed.

Why are the transmissions lines being routed around the city of Rochester, MN? Did the influence of Rochester area businesses and the Mayo Clinic give them special access to route planners? None of the proposed routes go near that city, yet that is the largest population area to be served by this project.

At the June meeting representatives of the project stated that they wanted to place the lines away from population centers - away from people.

Guess what, the citizens of rural Trempealeau County are people too. We choose to live in a rural environment for a reason, and we pay premium prices for the privilege. We pay more for all basic services like electricity and transportation. We receive less state and federal support for our infrastructure. We don't even have the broadband Internet access that is needed to open your files on the transmission line reports. That's okay, we accept less services as part of our choice to live in a rural area. But our choice does not include living under the transmission lines that are required to provide a better quality of life for people in urban area. If urban centers want a better quality of life they should live with the cost and consequences of that choice.

I-200-004

These lines will do nothing to improve the electric service in our area. Many of us live with poor service, constant fluctuation in power and regular power outages. These new transmission lines will in no way improve the delivery of electricity to our rural lanes.

Routing these lines through rural Trempealeau County is the most expensive option being considered. It is clear that these routes are only being considered because we can't scream as loud as the urban population centers and we have less influence on the decision makers. I urge you to deny funding to Dairyland Power and Riverland Energy for the purpose of building the CAPX2020 transmission lines through rural Trempealeau County.

Per capita and Population
County

Per capita 1999 per US census

I-200-001

Your comment has been noted. The criteria used to route the transmission line is described in the Macro Corridor Study which is available on the RUS website at:

<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. These criteria and routing process will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The project is still in the development and planning stages and the utilities have not yet permitted a route for the transmission line. The utilities are striving to provide the most up to date information in a timely manner. Project information is updated regularly on the project website, www.capx2020.com.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be available on the RUS website at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be solicited after its publication.

I-200-002

Your comment has been noted. The criteria used to route the transmission line is described in the Macro Corridor Study which is available on the RUS website at:

<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>. These criteria and routing process will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The project is still in the development and planning stages and the utilities have not yet permitted a route for the transmission line.

I-200-003

Your comment has been noted. Potential impacts to vegetation will be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Population 2008 estimate per US census

Trempealeau Cty. WI

\$17,681

27,790

La Crosse Cty. WI

\$19,800

112,627

Olmsted Cty. MN

\$24,939

141,360

NOTE: The combined population of La Crosse and Olmsted counties is nine (9) times greater than Trempealeau County. What is the likelihood that the voices of Trempealeau County citizens will carry the same weight in this discussion? We have already been put at a significant disadvantage in this discussion because planners did not consult us until May 2009 – all others were consulted repeatedly over a year ago.

Put the power lines by the people who will be using them, not by rural people who have no representation and will not benefit from this project.

Cristeen Custer
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I-200-004

Your comment has been noted. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement will describe, in detail, project purpose and need. The justification document which has been accepted by the RUS is the Alternative Evaluation study which is available at:
<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>.